

NSC BRIEFING

CARIBBEAN

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- I. In Nicaragua, Government which has been run by Somoza family for 25 years faced with most serious opposition in entire period. *Next few days may be critical.*
Internal defiance apparently more serious than external threat.
 - A. General strike called by a group representing widely disparate economic and political interests is about 70 percent effective; spreading despite economic reprisals by government.
 - B. Somoza reportedly offering concessions to Roberto Gonzales, Communist leader of general labor confederation, to keep federation from supporting strike. Such support considered necessary for its success. Gonzales seems willing to dicker with both sides.
 - C. There is anti-American flavor in some demonstrations arising from view that US ambassador has been close to Somoza family.
- II. President Somoza's attempts to provide transition period of increasing political freedom following father's dictatorship have satisfied neither those around him anxious to retain control nor opposition elements who think he proceeding too slowly, particularly in economic matters.
- III. Appeal to Organization of American States night of 2 June based on fear of further attacks by numerous Nicaraguan exiles active in several Caribbean countries.
 - A. Potential for unified action by Nicaraguan exiles not considered good.
 - B. There is an [REDACTED] that four boatloads of armed Nicaraguan rebels left Cuba on 1 June, possibly to join others

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- C. Honduran government which dislikes Somoza government traditionally reluctant to curb Nicaraguan exile activity on its territory.
- D. Exiles in Costa Rica now curbed by firm government action.
- E. National Guard--about 5,000 strong--under General Anastasio Somoza, Jr.--^{apparently still} ~~considered~~ loyal and capable maintaining stability.

IV. In Haiti, Government is trying to suppress knowledge that President Duvalier is seriously ill. He suffered coronary occlusion on 24 May. His doctor mistakenly treated him for diabetic condition and ended up putting Duvalier into insulin shock. US Navy doctor prognosis for recovery is excellent, but President will be unable to resume even partial duties for at least 6 weeks.

- A. Cabinet, with support of chief of Duvalier's repressive secret police, has assumed executive authority but lacks strong leaders and may not be able to maintain control when president's incapacity becomes known.
- B. Public order not yet seriously disturbed, but followers of exiled former provisional president Daniel Fignole are carrying out organized harassment which could lead to violent political and racial clashes.
- C. Power struggle appears to be shaping up between secret police and armed forces. Duvalier has systematically weakened and alienated military during his year and a half in office.

V. In Cuba, Fidel Castro's agrarian reform law still running into opposition: Some changes in implementation of law possible.

- A. The law still has not been printed in official gazette and thus not official.